

NRO - Organization

27 Dec 1965

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Memo for Dir of Recon, CIA  
From Jack C. Ledford, DSA  
Subj: NRO Staff

Gen. Ledford took strong exception to the NRO Staff proposal wherein that staff would function in both a staff and line capacity, and also objected to the overwhelming size of the proposed staff.

Concerned that we are continuing to move in the direction of normal DOD approach to Program Management. If continue along this line, it is his opinion that the NRO will soon flounder in its paperwork and echelons of bureaucracy and one of the primary reasons for its existence will be lost in the process.

Agreed that one weakness in the past organizational structure of NRO had been in lack of CIA participation in the manning of the NRO. Believed shld have representation at Dir or Dep Dir level and certainly as Director of R & D.

NRO review(s) completed.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Reconnaissance, CIA

SUBJECT: NRO Staff

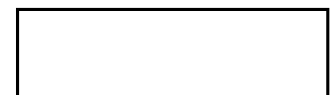
REFERENCE: Draft on the NRO Staff dated 20 December 1965

1. I have reviewed the reference document and after considerable thought have decided that my comments should be general in nature. My reason for this is that where a specific controversy may exist, it is implicitly an extension of both the basic concept of the staff/line function and the size of the proposed staff. If you accept these conditions, then disagreements are minimal. However, I do not accept either situation.

2. I would like to preface my remarks by expressing some concern that a discussion on the new NRO staff is somewhat premature. I fully recognize that you must start somewhere in implementing the NRO Agreement, however I do not think it should be with the NRO Staff. I suggest that the first order of business should be the defining, rather precisely, of the functions and responsibilities of the Directors of Reconnaissance of the various participating agencies and departments and their respective Program Directors. From this then would come the requirement, in terms of size, and the functions and responsibilities necessary for effective staff support of the D/NRO.

3. It came as somewhat of a surprise to learn that the NRO Staff is both a "staff" and "line" organization. I agree that any commander or director needs a staff organization to keep him advised and carry out normal "staff" functions. However, for this staff to function as part of the line organization is inconsistent with good management practices. It will at the very least establish another level of bureaucracy through which you and the Program Directors must wade before reaching the decision-making level.

4. If it is acceptable that a "staff" cannot function in the line organization then I would point out that the mere size of the proposed staff is overwhelming and its responsibilities and function are of an equal magnitude. My major concern is that we are continuing to move in the direction of the normal DOD approach to Program Management. If we



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continue along this line, it is my opinion that the NRO will soon flounder in its paperwork and echelons of bureaucracy, and one of the primary reasons for its existence will be lost in the process. Certainly there must be an NRO Staff, however, in the same instance it should not be the repository for all things. For example, much of what has been outlined as their responsibilities and functions are now and should continue to be within the purview of the participating agencies and departments.

5. On the plus side, I feel that the referenced paper does indicate a serious weakness in the past organizational structure of the NRO; and in doing so, quite properly lays partial cause for this on the lack of CIA participation in the manning of the NRO. In manning a "modest" NRO Staff this Agency certainly has no alternative but to actively participate and would be seriously remiss if it did not do so. This is true if for no other reason than to protect our own vested interest and to share equally in the voice of the NRO. In this context, I would strongly recommend that it be a complete coalition staff and we have representation at the Director or Deputy Director's level, and certainly as Director of Research and Development.

6. In summary, I would caution again that the NRO Staff be a "modest" one and that CIA's participation be in concert with this approach but none the less be a major contributor to its competency.

(Signed)  
JACK C. LEDFORD  
Brigadier General, USAF  
Director of Special Activities

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